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# *The MCA Advisory*

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*The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America*

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**From the Editor** 3

**Paypal** 3

**Webmaster's Report** (by Ben Weiss) 3

**Summary of Storage Solutions  
Suggested in E-mails of MCA Board  
Members** 4

**Storage Solutions for Medal  
Collectors** (by Donald Scarinci) 7

**Huybrechts Attend Opening of  
Belgium Art Medal Exhibit** (by Donald  
Scarinci) 10

**Admiral Vernon/Steinberg Pesant**  
(by Warren Lloyd Plumer) 15

**The Van Loon Medal**  
(by John W. Adams) 17

**Letters to the Editor** 14

## **Calendar for 2010**

August 12<sup>th</sup> Club meeting at Massachusetts  
Historical Society, Boston. Anne Bentley  
and John Adams to speak

**What's New on Our Website!**

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH**



## From the Editor

Earlier this month, John Sallay chaired the regular quarterly meeting of the MCA Board. Important new directions discussed were 1) the storage/conservation of medals and 2) the need for more books devoted to medals. The Advisory will focus on the first new direction in the current issue: readers will be treated to the best thinking of some of our most active collectors. In addition, the Board will use your feedback on the topic to inspire the creation of new storage products for needs not now met.

The February issue of the Advisory will address the relative dearth of books on medals. Readers with retentive memories will recall that Gerard van Loon received more than 900 subscriptions in advance for his opus on historical medals. No such enthusiasm exists today. Thus, we will have the dual task of fueling demand in addition to creating the supply. No doubt, we face a tough challenge but read the letter of Alex Shagin (below) to sample the inspiring talent that resides in our new membership.

## Pay Your MCA Annual Dues on Paypal!

It's that time of the year again! All dues are due in January.

Members of the MCA can now pay their yearly dues on our Paypal account.

If you send your dues via Paypal, please make payment using our Paypal e-mail address of [medalcollectors@comcast.net](mailto:medalcollectors@comcast.net). Also, please include a note with the following:

- Your name - so we can properly credit your payment.
- Number of Years – which you are paying your dues
- New or Renewing Member – We welcome new members to use Paypal,

but would like them to still fill out and send in an application for our records. Please indicate that you have already paid via Paypal on the application.

We are working on a link from the home page of the MCA web site so members can click and pay – but for now members need to use the e-mail address shown above.

The Paypal e-mail address can only be used to pay dues, and not for communicating with the MCA.

## Webmaster's Report (by Benjamin Weiss)

Our MCA website for 2009 has been particularly active, thanks to the large and much appreciated contributions of many of our members. On the **Organizational and News Section**, several items have been posted including meeting, articles and awards. The awards included an ANA Outstanding Specialty Club Publication Award given to John Adams for his wonderful MCA Advisory; a silver, engraved Libertas Americana medal given by our MCA organization to John Adams in appreciation for his many years of service and leadership; an award given to Glenn Stein for his design of an Antarctic Treaty Medal and another given to Glenn for winning a Journal prize; the Carl Carlson Award to Stephen K. Scher and the Georgia Stamm Chamberlain Award to Anne E. Bentley; and an award given to Henry Scott Goodman for winning Best of Show at the 2009 ANA Money Show.

On our **Members' Corner** we have posted a number of new medal collections, including: a group of Field Day Medals by Paul Lajoie, American School Medals by John Sallay, and Ludwig Gies Medals by Scott Goodman. New articles related to medals recently published included those by John Adams on *Admiral Vernon Medals* and an article on *Medallic History of Religious Intolerance* by Ben Weiss. Ben also has part of

his collection of medals placed on display in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Our **Oral History Project** (Oral History of Medallic Art), now coordinated and edited by Tony Lopez, has several new extensive interviews posted to our MCA website. These include Dick Johnson interviewed by John Sallay, John Adams interviewed by John Sallay, Alan Stahl interviewed by Dick Johnson and Eric Newman interviewed by John Adams and John Sallay. More of these interviews are in progress. Please contact Tony for more information on how to participate in this important and novel project initiated by the MCA.

Also please be reminded that under **Recommended Reading**, we have links to an extensive Bibliography on Medals as well as a Selected Annotated Bibliography. This section has embedded into it links to several books which have been published to the web by Google Books. By simply clicking on the relevant link on our site, you will be able to read these wonderful books online.

There are on our site Links to **Medal Collections on the Web**, including several recently posted such as John Sallay's NeoCollect, and Links to **Medal Organizations**.

In short (or long, in this case) our MCA website has become a source for a wide ranging body of information on Medals and Medal Collecting. In fact, the site has been cited as one of the most popular in its field, moving up near the top in Google searches.

To assure that our website will continue its preeminence in the field, members are encouraged to send me any activities, papers or book published, presentations, awards or any other information that might be of interest to medal collectors. For it is you, the members, who are responsible for its success.

Best wishes to all for the New Year,

Ben

## **MCA Offprints**

David Fanning is doing an excellent job of selling offprints of important articles from The Advisory. Currently, he has left in stock only the Truxton monograph and Dave Menchell's excellent piece on the French and Indian Wars. Mr. Fanning can be contacted at: David F. Fanning Numismatic Literature P.O. Box 132422, Columbus, OH 43213, (614) 256-8915, [dfanning@columbus.IT.com](mailto:dfanning@columbus.IT.com)

## **Summary of Storage Solutions Suggested in E-mails of MCA Board Members**

### **Ann E. Bentley:**

As Curator of Art at the Massachusetts Historical Society Ann employs a practical and affordable storage solution, not necessarily one that she recommends. She uses small (3.75" sq. x 3/4" high) archival media boxes obtainable from University Products in packages of 100 for \$168.50. (see <http://www.archivalsuppliers.com/prodinfo.asp?number=799-AMST>). She fits these with a liner and silver cloth for large medals up to 90 mm. However, larger or extra thick medals do not fit. She stores the smaller medals and coins in the old black bases used by most museums that have room for the label. As in most museums, all of the numismatic material at the Massachusetts Historical Society is stored flat in cabinets.





at Central States last year using custom holders that he purchased at <http://coinholdersonline.com/main.sc>

### **Tony Lopez**

Tony uses *Air Tite* holders for 90% of his medals which he then stacks in a tube sock, and places them in a safety deposit box. Tony reports that *Air Tite* now makes holders up to 101mm. He notes that *Air Tite* holders are sometimes not thick enough for high relief medals.

For specialty items like the Franklin Terra Cotta Piece, Tony has his holders custom made at Haug, <http://www.coinholdersonline.com/>. He relates the story as follows:

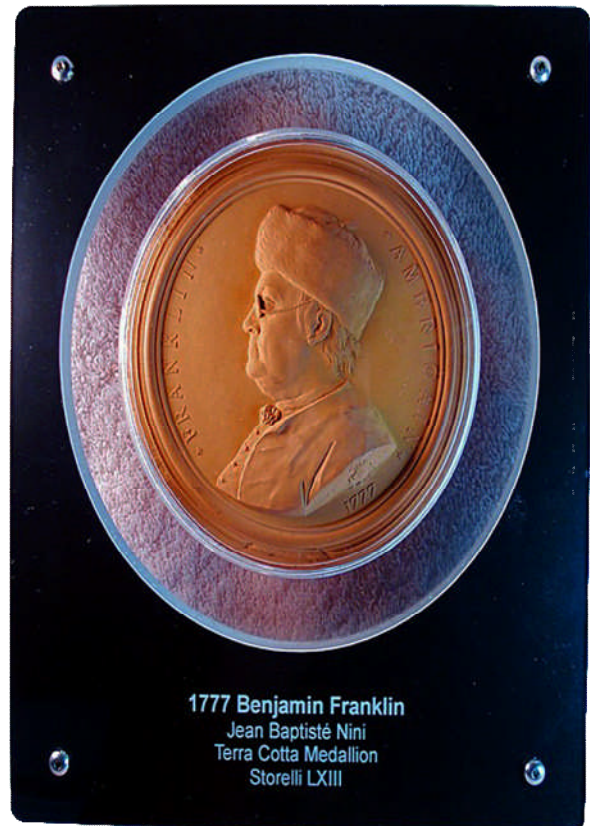
I had them make 3 custom holders for me...One actually safely holds a Franklin Terra Cotta piece! Photo attached. (It wasn't cheap, \$250 for the Franklin and the regular \$50 for the other 2 medals - but now I can safely handle the very fragile Nini medallion without fear of it breaking.)"



### **Bob Fritch**

Bob stores his medals in large (4-inch) safety flips which he obtains from Brooklyn Gallery. <http://www.brooklyn-gallery.com/cgi-bin/commerce.exe?preadd=action&key=0134-CFE061> He notes that they have other sizes too. <http://www.brooklyn-gallery.com/cgi-bin/commerce.exe?search=action&category=0134&keywords=all>

Bob stores some of his medals in custom holders and notes that he won an exhibit prize



### **Dave Menchel:**

Dave stores his medal collection by placing the medal in a polybag and inserting the folded polybag in a non-plasticized flip. Folding the polybag around the medal cushions it and reduces the risk of friction inserting and removing the medal from the flip. The 4 X 4 flips are available from Paul Pfeil at *Frame-a-Coin* in Madison, NJ

(<http://www.frameacoin.com>). Paul has sizes up to 6 X 8 " and oblong flips for storing medals with ribbons and hangers.

Dave notes that the PVC free holders are brittle and easily crack, especially at the fold. When storing heavy medals, he tapes the fold using Chinese cello tape. It does not tear on the container's ripper (or whatever you call that thing) and will barely cut with scissors. Ideal for shoring up the flip!

### **John Sallay**

John uses paper envelopes with cotton liners for smaller medals and envelopes with Jewelers tissue for larger medals. All of his medals fit in one of three sizes: 1) 2x2 heavy paper coin envelopes of the type that EAC members use for early coppers, 2) #4 "coin" envelopes (Columbian brand, 3 x 4 ½, made of 28# manila paper) and 3) "invitation" envelopes (Columbian brand, 4 3/8 x 5 3/4, made of 24# white paper). His largest medals are wrapped in anti-tarnish tissue and then placed in larger standard sized envelopes. These envelopes are kept in either blue plastic *Whitman* 2x2 coin boxes, larger card catalogue boxes as shown in the photos, or shoe boxes.

John gets his 2x2 envelopes and pouches from Rod Burress and the large items from office supply and jewelry supply houses. John recommends a system of high grade, heavy sulfur free paper holders with cotton pouches for medal collections in two sizes—3 ½ X 3 ½: and, 5 X 5.

While the disadvantage of the system is the need to remove the pieces from their cotton liners for viewing, the benefits of this system are as follows (quoting directly from John): (1)

Ability to write considerable information on the envelope about the medal – description, attribution, size, weight, provenance, source, cost, historical background. (2) Ability to put additional information in the envelope with the medal, such as the lot ticket(s) from previous auctions, family ephemera from the original owner. (3) Ability to leave the medal in its original holder, such as the John Paul Jones medal in the photo. (4) Preservation -- assuming non-acidic materials are used for the envelopes, with enough tissue to provide padding between medals. (5) Efficient storage space use, which can be important if you need safe deposit storage. (6) Low cost!



### **Donald Scarinci**

For medals larger than 45mm, Donald stores most of his collection of medals in 4 X 4 PVC free plastic flips obtained from Paul Pfeil. He



stores the flips in airtight Rubbermaid containers available at most grocery stores or the Container Store. In the sealed air tight environment, Donald places a *Z-Rust* strip and silica gel. Both of these items are available from most numismatic suppliers. Medals larger than 90mm do not fit in 4 X 4 flips, nor do many contemporary art medals which are usually cast and made in irregular shapes, or very high relief. These are stored in commercially available map cabinets lined with *Z-Rust* draw liners available at *Lowes Home Center* and custom made jewelers pads designed to fit the draw. The *Z-Rust* liners are essential because any wood other than mahogany is known to be corrosive to metal.

For medals 45mm and under, Donald uses either 2 ½ X 2 ½ PVC free plastic flips, Sulfur free paper holders lined with cotton pouches available from Rod Burrell or NGC holders for nicer material. The NGC holder has the added advantage of a disinterested third party opining about the medals surfaces and makes duplicates or upgrades easier to sell on eBay.



### **Ben Weiss**

Ben has made a custom cabinet where he stores his medals for short periods of time. The cabinet has the advantage of making a nice display. Ben's handmade cabinet contains nine draws with dimensions of approximately 48 cm tall, 54 cm wide and 37 cm deep. It is made of oak, which Ben cautions is not suitable for storing medals long term. The wood is highly reactive.



## **Storage Solutions for Medal Collectors** (By Donald Scarinci)

High relief medals, especially 20<sup>th</sup> century medals that are made in different diameters, depths and shapes, create storage problems for collectors. Most solutions are far from ideal and the methods that medal collectors use for storing their collections are quite creative.

Historically, coins and medals were kept in felt-lined drawers in mahogany wood cabinets. Some of these cabinets are luxurious pieces of furniture and are works of art in themselves. Cabinets today are made of wood and hard plastic and some of them are viable storage methods. Unfortunately, some woods and plastics can be harmful to metal. Cabinets also require more space than any bank safe deposit box allows.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, proof coins and medals were often wrapped in jeweler's tissue and stored in sulfur-free thick paper envelopes. Many old-time collectors continue this practice, or they may substitute polibags for jeweler's tissue because they are sold by numismatic suppliers. Some collectors substitute paper envelopes with clear 4 X 4 PVC-free plastic

flips so they can see their medals without removing them.

Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge and the commercial unavailability of storage systems for large medals have led collectors to store their medals in flexible PVC flips. Many classic medals today have an invisible slime that impairs the medals' beauty and, if left unremoved, causes irreparable damage over time. A medal's patina or coating applied at manufacture protects the surface longer than on a coin, but eventually, PVC will damage the surface of a medal as it damages any coin. Just look at the 76mm U.S. Mint medals that are left in their original boxes and soft plastic sealed bags. That surface corrosion is not removable.

There is a preferred method recommended by most early American copper (EAC) collectors for storing United States Large Cents. It is the same preferred method recommended by most colonial coin collectors (C-4). The coin is placed in a cotton liner, which is then put inside a sulfur-free 2 X 2 paper holder. Unfortunately for medal collectors, there is no manufacturer of 4 X 4 cotton liners or 4 X 4 or larger sulfur-free thick paper envelopes.

Cardboard boxes are an even safer way to store medals if they are wrapped in jewelers' tissue and placed inside a cotton liner, as well. The boxes used by the Medallic Art Company for their Society of Medalist medals, NYU Hall of Fame medals and other products up to the late 1980's have stood the test of time. Medals stored in them have retained their originality and do not seem to have experienced any damage due to the container. Unfortunately, again, there is no manufacturer of these sulfur-free cardboard boxes, or the cotton liners required to prevent medals from banging loosely inside the box.

During the last 30 years, PVC-free hard plastic flips have become popular. Cointains and other hard plastic tight-fit holders, made in many diameters to prevent a medal from moving, are probably the safest method of storage available. These hard plastic holders

include capital plastic holders, airtight holders, coin capsules and other PVC-free products.

While there is no shortage of hard plastic storage solutions for coins and medals up to 42mm, if the diameter of a medal exceeds 45mm or if it has high relief or extra thickness, the storage choices available to conservation-conscious collectors begin to narrow dramatically. Numismatic suppliers offer a hard plastic round container manufactured by Airtight Holders, but it comes in only four diameters—63 inch, 65 inch and 76 inch and 101 inch. Only the 76 inch is extra wide. This holder fits most modern U.S. Mint medals and Franklin Mint Calendar art medals perfectly. For most high relief medals, however, the depth is not adequate.

Hard plastic holders are expensive. Currently, the only hard plastic holder for high relief or large size medals is available either from Capital Plastics or NGC. Yes, the latter will authenticate and grade many medals before encapsulating them, although not all medals qualify for the service.

NGC containers, known as "slabs," are a very effective storage solution. Medals can be reviewed and encapsulated by professional graders for less than the price of a custom Capital Plastic holder. If a collector wants to remove the medal from the holder, it is easy enough to do with a few taps of a hammer or a little pressure from a vice on the edges. But once removed, the medal cannot be placed back in the holder without returning it to NGC and paying another fee.

Capital Plastic holders have the advantage of allowing the medal to be removed by unscrewing the edges. But they may not always fit exactly right. Also, the insert holding the medal is made of hard plastic and it is sometimes difficult to pop the medal out. NGC inserts are soft plastic and the medal comes out easily, without much risk of damage by bending the plastic.

NGC has begun encapsulating medals that are larger than 45mm using their jumbo slab, sometimes referred to as the "slab on

steroids.” Unfortunately, this slab is much too large for most medals and requires too much storage space. It is likely that NGC will develop an intermediate size slab to better fit medals between 46mm and 80mm, the size range for most medals.

While the custom Capital Plastic holder and the NGC slab might be the optimal storage methods, they can be too expensive for most collectors and for medals which typically cost less than \$100. A custom Capital Plastic holder for a large medal might average about \$70, unless buying in bulk. The large NGC slab might cost as much as \$42 (the grading fee of \$16.50 for medals valued at under \$300, plus the jumbo slab fee of \$25). Spending this money to store objects that cost under \$100 is not something that most collectors consider to be prudent.

Many collectors choose to store their medals in 4 X 4 PVC-free plastic flips. Medals larger than 90mm create storage problems and they need to be kept in either felt pouches or in cabinet drawers. Medals less than 65mm swim in the 4 X 4 and fit better in the more standard 3 ¼ X 3 ¼ flip. Medals between 50mm and 40mm fit best in 2 ½ X 2 ½ flips.

For collectors who use PVC-free hard plastic flips, the 4 X 4 size is available only from one manufacturer, Paul Phiel at Frame-a-Coin in Madison, NJ (<http://www.frameacoin.com>). Unfortunately, no container is available for storing collections of medals in flips larger than 3 ¼ X 3 ¼, so it is necessary to find a commercial alternative. Tupperware or similar containers can be purchased to store the 4 X 4 size flips. These have the added advantage of being airtight. Inserting a packet of silica gel and some Intercept Shield material or Z-Rust products in these containers creates a fairly safe environment for long-term storage.

While PVC-free plastic flips are the most cost-effective way to store medals, it is not the safest way. Even when a medal is first placed in a PVC-free polybag or wrapped in jewelers’ tissue, it can still rub against other

medals and cause friction. The flip offers no protection against accidentally dropping it or moving it around too roughly.

A cost-effective uniform storage system for medals is badly needed. The system should include up to four standard size sulfur-free boxes, expandable high gauge paper, or cardboard holders with extra thick cotton liners to fit inside them. These boxes or flips should come with larger containers that can hold up to 20 medals each.

It would be interesting to compare the average medal sizes of other collections, but based on this writer’s collection, the four box sizes that would be most needed are: 2 ½ X 2 ½ for medals up to 55mm; 3 ¼ X 3 ¼ (similar to the Medallic Art Company’s box for the NYU Hall of Fame medal), which would hold medals from 55mm to 76mm; the 4 X 4 box for medals between 76mm and 90mm; and a 5 X 5 box for larger medals between 90mm and 120mm.

A strong argument could be made to favor expandable thick paper or cardboard flips over boxes. Medals vary in thickness as well as diameter. It is as bad for a medal to jiggle loosely in a box as it is to rub snugly against other medals. Boxes for the two larger sizes would need to be made in half inch and one inch sizes to accommodate the thickness, the relief and the cotton liner. Cardboard flips could be made to expand to 1 inch regardless of the medal and still fit tightly if the medal has a lesser thickness. Thus, expandable high gauge paper or cardboard flips would not need to be manufactured in different diameters and could be more uniform and more cost-effective than boxes.

Whatever size, style or color is ultimately preferred and manufactured, uniformity is important. There is nothing as aesthetically unappealing as a collection stored in a mixture of containers. Unfortunately, this is the current state of our collecting area.

### **Recommendation:**

*For the best combination of ease of use and cost effectiveness in a safe storage system for*

*medals, I recommend three sizes of expandable high gauge sulfur-free paper holders--3 1/4 X 3 1/4; 4 X 4; and 5 X 5. Cotton liners, also expandable, need to be manufactured to fit these holders, as well, so the medal can be placed in a cotton liner and inserted in a paper flip. Just about every medal should fit into one of these, even though the 45mm to 60mm medals might float a bit. There is no storage problem for medals under 45mm because they fit within existing products. After ample discussion and airing of different views on the subject, I recommend that the Medal Collectors of America (MCA) should proactively communicate with numismatic suppliers and manufacturers with specifications for a medal storage system.*

#### **David's comments about medal storage are reprinted here in full:**

"My experiences with medal storage go back to 1953 when my late brother and I received our first medal, a bronze portrait piece of then-Archbishop Francis Spellman of New York as Ordinary of the U.S. Armed Forces. This was a quasi-papal medal by Aurelio Mistruzzi and was followed by several thousand more medals down to the present. Storage was always a problem, especially when those PVC flips became available and were highly seductive until their true nature emerged."

"Some decades ago I inherited an oak map or blueprint cabinet some six feet in height, more than a yard wide and deep with space for 30 sliding drawer-shelves. These were missing, off course! A skilled carpenter fabricated a full set of replacements, which we lined with felt. Several hundred large diameter U.S. Mint, U.S. and world medals now occupy these shelves, organized by topic or country."

"Many small-diameter pieces are housed in a colorful jumble of Lembit cases, mini-coin cabinets intended for ancient coins and a variety of other ad hoc containers."

"Specialized collections include my research collection of Circle of Friends of the Medallion and Society of Medalists (SOM) issues. I have about 310 SOM's, housed in their original cardboard boxes from Medallic Art Co. The Circle of Friends were released in 1909-1915 in tan-covered books, stored on library shelves while the medals repose in similar small boxes. All have cotton lining courtesy of SOM and are housed in a gray steel medical records cabinet of 30 drawers. Here they are safe and accessible."

## **Huybrechts Attends Opening of Belgium Art Medal Exhibit**

(by Donald Scarinci)

Paul Huybrechts, Belgium sculptor and artist of that country's first ECU coins was on hand for the opening reception of *Independence in Medals: Belgium Since 1830*. The exhibit opened December 12, 2009 at Medialia...Rack & Hamper Gallery in New York City and will remain open through January 23, 2010. It can be viewed online at [www.medialiagallery.com](http://www.medialiagallery.com). Contemporary Belgian art medals have a distinctively international theme. As a sculptor, Paul Huybrechts is the voice of Belgium to the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Many of his medals are on exhibit.

Highlights of Huybrechts' work include his collaboration with Elizabeth Jones in 1992 for a medal commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Discovery of America. Huybrechts sculpted the obverse which shows a Spanish caravan heading west across the horizon. Jones sculpted a reverse showing COBE "Discovery of fluctuations in cosmic background," representing present day America.

A commission Huybrechts won as a result of an international competition produced the official medal for *Europalia Mexico '93*. This medal shows Mexico on the reverse and a native in Mayan dress on the obverse as a

tribute to the rich history and culture of that country.

Some of Huybrechts' more recent work on display included *Sunken Treasures of Egypt*, sculpted in 2007. This medal employs blue enamel beneath a polished lacquered surface, which gives the piece a dreamlike quality. The creative patination enhances the medal's subject, the recovery of long-lost Egyptian artifacts found in the Mediterranean Sea a year or so earlier. This medal celebrates a discovery of international significance and contrasts the art of the past, represented by the Egyptian statues, with the very modern use of patination and technology employed to create the visual effect.

Huybrecht says that: "The enamel symbolizes the Mediterranean Sea with some treasures at the bottom. All the pieces represented were found in the sunken site of Canope to the east of Alexandria. The statue of Queen Arsinoe II (the finest of the finds) shows Greek influence and the god Serapis (on the right) is in a completely Hellenistic style."<sup>i</sup> Those attending the exhibit were treated to another one of Machico's outstanding catalogs. This one contains an introduction by Luc Vandamme which outlines the history of the Belgium medal and creates the framework for the exhibit.

Vandamme divides the history of the Belgium medal into four periods. The first, the engraved medals, 1830-1890, explains how King Leopold I commissioned artists to create a sense of nationalism after the revolution of 1830, when the nation was formed. He explains that Leopold used medals to commemorate the history of the new nation, which had successively been a part of Austria, France and the Netherlands.<sup>ii</sup>

Vandamme explains Belgium's internationalism succinctly in the first paragraph of his introduction. He says, "Indeed, an inhabitant in his fifties in 1830 had successively been an Austrian, a Frenchman and a Dutchman. How was he supposed to feel Belgian all of a sudden?"<sup>iii</sup>

Machico's exhibit includes the work of artists like Adolphe Jouvenel, Julien Leclercq and Charles Weiner, to illustrate the skill of Belgian artists. Their medals portray the monarchy and other great people of the new nation.

The second period, the "Belle Epoque," 1890 to 1915, according to Vandamme, "gave sculptors the opportunity to write a major period of history through medals."<sup>iv</sup> Art nouveau flourished in Paris, and Belgian artists were trained and influenced there. However, they produced medals with distinctly Belgian subjects.

Machico's exhibit showcases the great artists of this period: Godefroid Devreese (1861-1941); Paul Du Bois (1859-1938); Jules Jourdain (1873-1967); Jules Lagae (1862-1931); Pierre Theunis (1885-1950) and several others. The work of these artists illustrates mastery of technique and the developing Belgian voice.

In 1901, the Belgian-Dutch Society of the Friends of the Art Medal was formed. Attempting to mimic the success of the French Art Medal Society, they offered a medal from Belgium and a medal from the Netherlands on alternating years. Like its French counterpart, this series was a showcase for the artists, the mints, and both of the small nations.

Vandamme calls the period between the two world wars, 1915 to 1940, the "interbellum." He notes that while many artists of the previous period continued to work, newcomers began to create in art deco, the new style of the time.

Machico showcased the work of Armand Bonnetain (1883-1973); Eugene Debremaecker (1879-1963); Georges Petit (1879-1958); Geo Verbanck (1881-1961) and Marcel Rau (1886-1966).

In 1920, these artists and others sculpted medals for the "Friends of the Art Medal," an annual series like its predecessor, the Belgian-Dutch Society of the Friends of the Art Medal. This series, however, consisted exclusively of Belgian artists and featured



exclusively Belgian themes and a Belgian mint. The series lasted until 1955.

It should be noted that in 1925, the Netherlands began its own series of art medals, as well. It was called, “Vereeniging voor Penningkunst” (Association for Medallic Art) which still produces medals and has an active membership. They produced a magazine for members called “De Geuzenpenning” from 1951 to 1976. In 1976, the magazine was renamed “De Beeldenaar,” and has been published quarterly since then.

The period between 1940 and 1980 is the “modern” period. Sculptors in France, Poland, and other parts of Eastern Europe began to prefer cast medals over struck medals. The more they viewed themselves as sculptors, the more they embraced the modernism of sculpture.

Belgium was not a leader of modernism, but it was affected by new trends in art medals. The preference toward struck medals, however, remained. Machico illustrates this trend with work from artists like Charles Leplae, Duc Verlee, and Harry Elstrom.

After World War II, medals never seemed to generate the same excitement among the Belgium people as they had before the war. While Dutch artists such as Piet Esser led the experimentation with the cast medal and worked with modernist ideas in art, the Belgian art medal advanced somewhat more slowly. Paul Huybrechts explains that, “medallic art isn’t known at all, especially by the younger generation.”<sup>v</sup>

He says, “The responsibility for this lies partly with teachers who do not value these small pieces of art which mostly commemorate the milestones of history. In other words: world history can be (and has often been) reconstructed by historical coins and medals.”<sup>vi</sup> In an attempt to bring Belgian medals into the spotlight once again, Paul Huybrechts and others formed a new art medal society in 1991 called, “Promotion of the Art Medal.” This group encouraged new artists by publishing one

medal a year for its members. They continue to be active and have become an incubator for new trends in the Belgian art medal.

Luc Vandamme and Machico use the 1980 date to mark the beginning of the “contemporary” or current period of Belgium art medals. They do not give a reason for selecting that date, as opposed to 1991, which might have been more logical. However, “contemporary” certainly can be defined as the period when living and working artists are producing their work.

Not surprisingly, Machico selects some of the medals from the “Promotion of the Art Medal” to illustrate current trends in the Belgian art medal. Foremost among these artists is the work of Paul Huybrechts.

The opening reception for the exhibit, *Independence in Medals: Belgium Since 1830* had the class and sophistication of all of Maschico’s New York City gallery openings. The added treat this time was the inclusion of a piano recital by Monique Jobin of Belgium. Guests were treated to some of her original pieces performed in a setting among beautiful medals elegantly displayed.

### **An Extraordinary Medal Cabinet**

*Philadelphia antiques dealer Anthony Stuempfig (aapstuempfig@gmail.com) found the MCA website while searching for information on the CC Wright Erie Canal Medal to add to a website he publishes on early New York furniture. That led to an e-mail discussion of an extraordinary medal cabinet that he has available for sale. We now know that wood is not an ideal storage medium for medals due to the natural acidity, but this cabinet is an exceptionally beautiful object in its own right and a window onto the collecting habits of a very affluent – perhaps royal – medal collector of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Below are excerpts from his e-mails. JMS*



**An Extraordinary Marquetry Panel Decorated Medal & Coin Collector's Cabinet, with contrasting premier partie & contre partie panels.  
Made by: George Bullock, London, circa 1816-18  
Height 24 ins., Width 22 ins., Depth 12 ins.**

Hello,

I unintentionally came across your interesting website (June 2008 issue, pages 11-14) and the write-up regarding the Erie Canal Celebration, today, and offer some further information.

You might find a website that I publish interesting in regard to the CC Wright medal ([www.duncanphyfe.org](http://www.duncanphyfe.org)). The medal, the bird's-eye maple box and images of the various badges and tickets for the Erie Canal Celebration are all shown on the site. There is a great deal more to the actual celebration and Cadwallader Colden's "memoir", than is noted on your site. Included in a sumptuous leather-bound volume published for the celebration, which was presented with a boxed medal to important personages, were many fold out pages showing the entire length of the Erie Canal, as well as other fascinating information on the mechanics of the locks and history of the construction.

As I recall, the Museum of the City of New York or the New York Historical Society have one of the CC Wright gold medals in a morocco case.

I have a silver medal in a bird's-eye maple box and a presentation copy of Colden's memoir, which has a letter dated 1830 attached. I believe neither the medals nor the memoir were completed in time for the actual celebration, and were presented to notable dignitaries after the fact, and if the letter noted above is any indication, for quite some time after the celebration.

You also might find interesting a Medal collector's cabinet dating c. 1816-1818 made by George Bullock (London). Bullock was the most famous Regency period English cabinetmaker, and there was a major exhibition of his work at various museums and galleries in 1988. The original drawing for this cabinet - which was not known to exist at that time - is illustrated in the catalog.

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With regard to the Bullock cabinet, I will send some images separately in a few emails as they are large. It is priced at \$275,000. It is undoubtedly the finest English Regency medal collector's cabinet - specifically made for that purpose - known. As I mentioned, Bullock is without question, the paramount English Regency cabinetmaker of the period.



View showing opened left bank drawers with a few pulled out showing ebony inserts and numbered cutouts, and ivory knobs. Note premiere and contre partie panels on front and side (all veneers of marquetry panels are reversed); dark background, light inlays, and, light background with dark inlays...



Cabinet closed



The original drawing for the cabinet; Wilkinson Tracings No. 99.

Dimensions of cabinet are: 22" W x 12" D x 21" H. There are 32 drawers (16 on each bank).

Left bank with 16 drawers, ebony inserts and cutouts for 141 medals (& a funeral medal) which was obviously an existing, probably English, collection (circa 1816-1818, the time of manufacture of cabinet). Hole sizes range from 5/8" to 2 5/8" with many approximately 1 5/8" Diameter. Two bottom drawers on left bank are without inserts, for oversized or irregularly shaped medals (I assume).

Right bank 16 drawers with slightly later ebonized (stained to look like) mahogany inserts with cutouts of approximately the same

general sizes. Those (right bank) are not numbered. All drawers have original turned ivory knobs. All drawers lined with rose colored silk velvet.

The case is of oak and holly, with contrasting premiere and contre partie marquetry panels on front (oak with holly inserts) and sides (holly with oak inserts). The original circa 1816-1818 drawing for the cabinet is inscribed, "Medal Case of Oak and Holly."

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This is just conjecture, but as you are probably aware, Christies Auction in London had many numismatic sales in the late 18th and particularly in the early 19th century when, "medal," collecting was the rage. It is entirely feasible that the existing collection of 141 medals which the cabinet was made to exhibit might have been sold at auction at some point in the first half of the 19th century. I say this only because it is entirely possible that with some serious research, the collection for which the cabinet was made might be documented, and, the patron of Bullock's who commissioned the cabinet, identified, which would be quite extraordinary. There were, apparently, many sales of ancient - Greek and Roman - coins, and medals both ancient and 18th century, and, early 19th century during which period numerous medals were produced as memorials or, to commemorative various important personages or important historical moments, as I am sure you are aware.

With regard to emails and the Duncan Phyfe site, I would be delighted if you were to publish them in the MCA Advisory. I also would be pleased if you were to use the photos and information on the cabinet. You may note the price, or not, as you prefer and I would welcome any interest and contact from members.

Regards,

Anthony

## **Admiral Vernon/Steinberg-Pesant** (by Warren Lloyd Plumer)

John - Back in 1969 a collector friend, Dr. Edward Majilton, collected many of the same areas that I did. Over a few years I purchased a number of very nice tokens and medals from him...and later at various auctions, when he decided to retire and sell his collection. At the time I lived in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y., perhaps 45 minutes drive from N.Y.C. He recommended that I visit dealer, William Fox Steinberg, who had a retail coin store in the city, and had offered a collection of Vernon medals. I really did not know anything about Vernon medals, but decided to visit Steinberg. That was the start of the collection. Soon as I saw the pieces, I was interested and purchased them all, about 20 medals. As I recall (and it has now been 40 years since) Steinberg told me the following. About 5 years prior (around 1964 ?) he stated that well known collector, Roberto Pesant, sold him the medals. He indicated that Pesant had left Cuba after Fidel Castro took over, and found himself needing to sell off his coin collection. Steinberg indicated that Pesant had hoped to re-buy the Vernon medals, if still available. Evidently, Steinberg had hoped that Pesant would do so. He indicated that while he sold off other coins, etc that he had purchased from Pesant, that he put the Vernon medals in the back of the office safe. But, after 5 years Pesant had not contacted him about possibly buying the medals. Along with the medals I was given a small booklet that was put together by Roberto Pesant. He made a pencil tracing of each medal (obverse & reverse). Then he pasted the cut out tracings onto small pages, and wrote a very detailed description below each medal. He listed 17 medals in his booklet, but there were a few others not yet included. Of the approx 20 medals I purchased, there are still 14 of Pesant's in my collection. Over the years I sold off a few pieces as I acquired a higher grade specimen or had a duplicate.



After buying the medals, I spoke with coin dealer friend, Morris Geiger, who told me about the McCormick-Goodhart book, and located a copy for me. Later I purchased the reprint of the Betts book. I never had the opportunity to meet or correspond with Roberto Pesant, but noted he belonged to one of the same coin organizations as I did. I was going to try and contact him, but as often

happens...time went by, and then I saw an article about him after he passed away. Along the way I had opportunity to meet / talk with others about Vernon medals. I never lost interest in collecting Vernon medals, but as my listing on Neocollect shows, some years I obtained medals, and then there were gaps of time in between. Hope you enjoy viewing my collection.

2

ADMIRAL VERNON

(Extract from "American Colonial History, Illustrated by Contemporary Medals" C. W. Betts, N.Y. 1894, Scott Stamp & Coin Co. Ltd.)

Edward Vernon was born November 12, 1684, in Westminster, England. He was the descendant of an ancient family, and at the early age of eighteen he received the commission of second lieutenant in the navy. It was, however, nearly twenty-five years later before he became famous.

The strongly fortified harbor of Porto Bello for two centuries had been one of the most important outlets of Spain in the New World. Its situation was at the northern point of the great bend of the Isthmus of Panama.

July 9, 1739 he was made Admiral of the Blue and July 30 he sailed for the West Indies with nine men-of-war. Reached Jamaica Oct. 2. On 5 November he sailed for Porto Bello with six ships only: the Dufferin, (flag ship), the HAMPTON COURT (Commander Brown), the NORWICH, the WORCESTER, the STAFFORD and the LOUISA. The latter ship was sent by Vernon to cruise off Cartagena and did not actually take part in the engagement. The victory was on 12 March 1740 published in the London Gazette.


Vernon's subsequent career was a disappointment. In March 1741 he captured Chigoe. In Jan. 1741 he was surprised by a fleet of the Six Chaloups Ogle. 30 ships + 1000 vessels and 12000 soldiers under Gen. Wentworth were put under his command. The following March he attacked Cartagena with partial success, but lost St. Louis held out. He was forced to retire but had successfully sent success parcels to England. Did not even attempt to attack Havana.

Retired 1746. Died at Nacton, Suffolk, Oct 29, 1757

3.

Vernon, Brown & Woffole

A



1. Admiral Vernon & Brown Betts No. 246

AE. 36 mm.

Obv.: Two men in uniform shaking hands, and with the other hands holding their swords. The one at the left with drawn sword and the one at the right on the sword hilt. Above, a Royal Crown, between their heads, and below, between them, a two masted ship sailing to the right. All around, starting from the ground and with a curving line underneath, the legend: THE BRITISH GLORY REVIV'D BY ADM'L: VERNON: COMR: BROWN

Rev.: The devil with two horns, walking to the left toward the gaping jaws of a toothy monster on the left. On the right hand he holds a five-pronged fork and from the left he is holding a short rope which is wound around the neck of a man. The man stands to the right with his left hand resting on the sword scabbard and his left on the sword with point to the ground. From the devil's mouth a ribbon-like streamer curves up and around the upper border and around to the right, with the following words in it: MAKE ROOM FOR SIR ROBERT. (The E in MAKE and the O in FOR, almost illegible). In the exergue: NO EXCISE.

# The Van Loon Medal

(by John W. Adams)





## Letters to Editor

Dear John,

Enclosed is an article on current medal art—a different one for me. The advent of the 3 inch (76mm) in France in 1963 has opened a Pandora's box for Art Calendar medals including official mint issues from France, Korea, Portugal. The continuing series of Mint calendars from Austria (only 40mm) and Japan (38 mm) go on but they stay with usual size.

Because of the large size, I showed all sample medals at 64% size, except for one.

I included, for the first publication that I know of, the Dutch 1582 medal issued when the calendar change occurred in that year. I found it listed in an 1897 publication (duly noted in the *Numismatist* in January 1971). However Bob Levinson acquired one from Europe last year, and it is listed in Van Loon (though I had never noted it). It precedes the other most early calendar medal noted that is dated 1650.

I'll email this letter along with the text. The four plates and a hard copy will be sent via USPS.

Good information from the New York International show—I've never had the privilege of attending. Of course the Stack's book sale was amazing—hope you were able to buy something. By the way, did the sixth century medal actually sell?

Best regards.

George Fuld

## The New World of Calendar Medals (by George J. Fuld)

The collecting specialty of calendar medals has been largely neglected by current numismatists. When the late Stuart Mosher, then curator of Numismatics at the Smithsonian sold us his collection in 1948 several caveats were imposed. One was that we (my father, Melvin and me) would resume Stuart's series, "Token Collectors Pages". We complied with the request and our first article appeared in the 1951 *The Numismatist*. The other was that we should expand one favorite area of Stuart's--calendar medals.

Stuart's seed collection of calendars was only about 25 medals. Over the next thirty years the two of us amassed over 300 different calendars. These were serially described in *The Numismatist* under the tutelage of the editor, Elston Bradfield. They were published from January 1956 to November 1959 and continued later from October 1971 until February 1975.

Most calendar medals (and store cards) were issued in sizes from 37 to 44 mm. The earliest calendar we were aware of was dated 1582, noted in October, 1971 *The Numismatist*. It was described by Demanig in "Deutsche Medaillen (Vienna, 1897 as #748 on page 117. At that time no specimen was located. Bob Levinson of Los Angeles recently acquired a specimen of the 1582 issue in commemoration of the changing of the calendar. He pointed out that his medal is listed in the Dutch medal opus by Van Loon. An image of this medal is shown by the courtesy of Bob Levinson.

Two publications updated the Fuld cataloging. James O. Sweeny privately published a thorough revision of English calendar medals. Another book in German was published by Werner Strothotte titled "Die Zeit in Der Numismatik" in 2004 which listed and illustrated many European calendars. A. J. Turner published what he thought was a new study on calendars medals in the *American Journal of Numismatics* Second series vol 5-6



(1993-94), pages 209-219. He was totally unaware of American publications on calendar medals.

Yearly issues of English calendar medals occurred in England, but they were by private coiners. Sweeny's revision denotes them in detail. The first official calendar medals issued by a national mint was the Austrian Mint in 1933. These are still issued currently. Originally they were available in bronze, silver plate and sterling silver. Today, if you can afford it, they can be supplied in gold. They have maintained the series throughout the years with a 40 mm size. The Japanese Mint started to issue yearly calendars in 1948 and have continued to the present. They are issued in bronze with early issues in a 38 mm size up to 1951, but then switched to a smaller 30 mm dimension. These are available from the Mint in Osaka, Japan

However, starting in 1963, massive calendars were issued in a 76mm size. As best I can tell, the first 76mm issue was by the Paris Mint. Although I assume these were issued for every year since 1963 but so far have not been able to identify calendars from 1964-1965, 1972-1979, 1990-1995, 1997, 2001 and 2003-2004. Two different versions appeared in 1998, 1999 and 2006. In the Fuld listings of calendars, in 1973, the first of these 76mm calendars from 1968 to 1971 were illustrated. We did not predict the trend to the 76mm Art medals that have become popular in the last forty years.

Actually the first private issue of 76 mm Art medals was the Franklin Mint in 1967. It showed large bust of Franklin on the obverse. Sculptor Gilroy Roberts, retired engraver from the U. S. Mint, engraved this first medal. Similar medals were issued in 1968 and 1972. Starting in 1973, Art medal calendars were issued by the Franklin Mint from 1973 through 2001. D. Wayne Johnson's (Dick) data base on calendar medals detailed identification of the engravers of the Art calendar medals, starting in 1967. This data was extracted from Johnson's massive study in work on American

engravers and sculptors. The Franklin Mint issues all have been recorded except 1991 and 1997 which I assume do exist. In almost all cases, Johnson has identified the sculptor of the medals.

The Medallic Art Company entered the field of 76 mm Art medals in 1975. They were issued yearly from the three MACO different locations of the period ending in 2004. Dick's tenure at MACO allowed him to detail specific descriptions and the sculptor for each MACO medal from 1975 through 1990. I have located illustrations of each medal except for 1997.

The Hoffman Mint issued 76 mm Art calendars starting in 1993 and then yearly from 1996 to 2005 until they were discontinued. They deviated from the 76mm size only once when they issued a rectangular medal in 1997. Sculptors of their medals was not revealed as they used in-house employees for the engraving.

Medalcraft issued 76 mm Art calendars starting in 1986 up to the present time. Johnson's data base revealed the sculptors for the years 1992 through 1995. It even issued bi-color medals in 2008.

The South Korea Mint apparently started issuing 76 mm Art medals in 2000 up to the current 2009 issues. I have not seen Korean medals from 2006 and 2007.

While various companies have ceased the issue of 76 mm calendar medals, a new firm entered in late 2009. Northwest Territorial Mint of Auburn, WA issued a Boy Scout 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary calendar.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) issued 69 mm Art calendar medals from 1981 to 1983, but other years may exist.

An 88 mm Art calendar from Portugal has been seen dated 1983 and I suspect other years are available

There are a number of issues from various private enterprises. These include 76 mm Art issues observed from John Deere, Caterpillar Tractor, Mozart in 1991 from Austria, Boy

Scouts of America 1910, Louisiana World Exposition in 1984 and Cinema's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1995 and an English Art medal commemorating Shakespeare.

With the above listing of 76mm (with a few in different large sizes) brings up the topic—is there any artistic merit to this outpouring of 76 mm Art medal calendars? The engravers of the medals are well publicized by the Franklin Mint and the MACO issues. The artists for other company series such as Medalcraft are only partially revealed. The Hoffman Mint sculptors were not publicized. MACO also employed the well known sculptor, Marcel Jovine, for many of its issues. MACO employed sculptor Frank Elliscu for its initial issue in 1975. The Franklin Mint employed various sculptors for its issues. Such as Dominic Angelini, Clifford Schule, Al Fiorentino, Ernest Lauser, Vincent Miller, Clayton Blaker, Gilroy Roberts (for the initial issue in 1967), and Donald Everhart, II. When a final catalog of the Art medals is completed, Dick's Johnson's data will be used for in elucidating the current Art calendar medals backgrounds.

Clearly the artistic merit varies by both the issuing company and the sculptor. We are showing various examples of the Art medals. Since three inch medals shown full size require large areas, a compromise in illustrating them is required. I have selected one medal shown in full size, and examples of other productions at 64% full size. You can judge for yourself which medal is worthy of the name, Artistic Calendar Medal.

I wish to emphasize that this updated project on metallic calendar medals is a "WORK IN PROGRESS". The observations of issues is often spotty and hopefully in coming months more calendars can be found—mostly on the internet. Hopefully some of the foreign mints that issue calendar medals will supply us with illustrations of their product. Forty years ago both the Austrian Mint and the Japanese Mint did make illustrations of their

issues available. To date, such continuing cooperation has not occurred.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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**How did you learn about the MCA?**

**What are your collecting interests?**

**What would you see highlighted in MCA publications?**

**For volunteers: I am willing to devote time to the following MCA projects:**

**DUES: \$30.00 PER CALENDAR YEAR (Includes a subscription to monthly publications of the MCA advisory)**

Please send completed application and payment to:

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Ellicott City, MD 21042

Or email completed form to: [bdtayman@verizon.net](mailto:bdtayman@verizon.net)  
MCA WEBSITE: <http://www.medalcollectors.org>

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<sup>i</sup> See "The Medal" no. 52, 2008

<sup>ii</sup> Catalog of the Exhibit, at p.5.

<sup>iii</sup> Id. at p.5

<sup>iv</sup> Id. at p.5

<sup>v</sup> Id at p.6

<sup>vi</sup> Id at p.6